Edited by Nick Aikens

REWINDING INTERNATIONALISM

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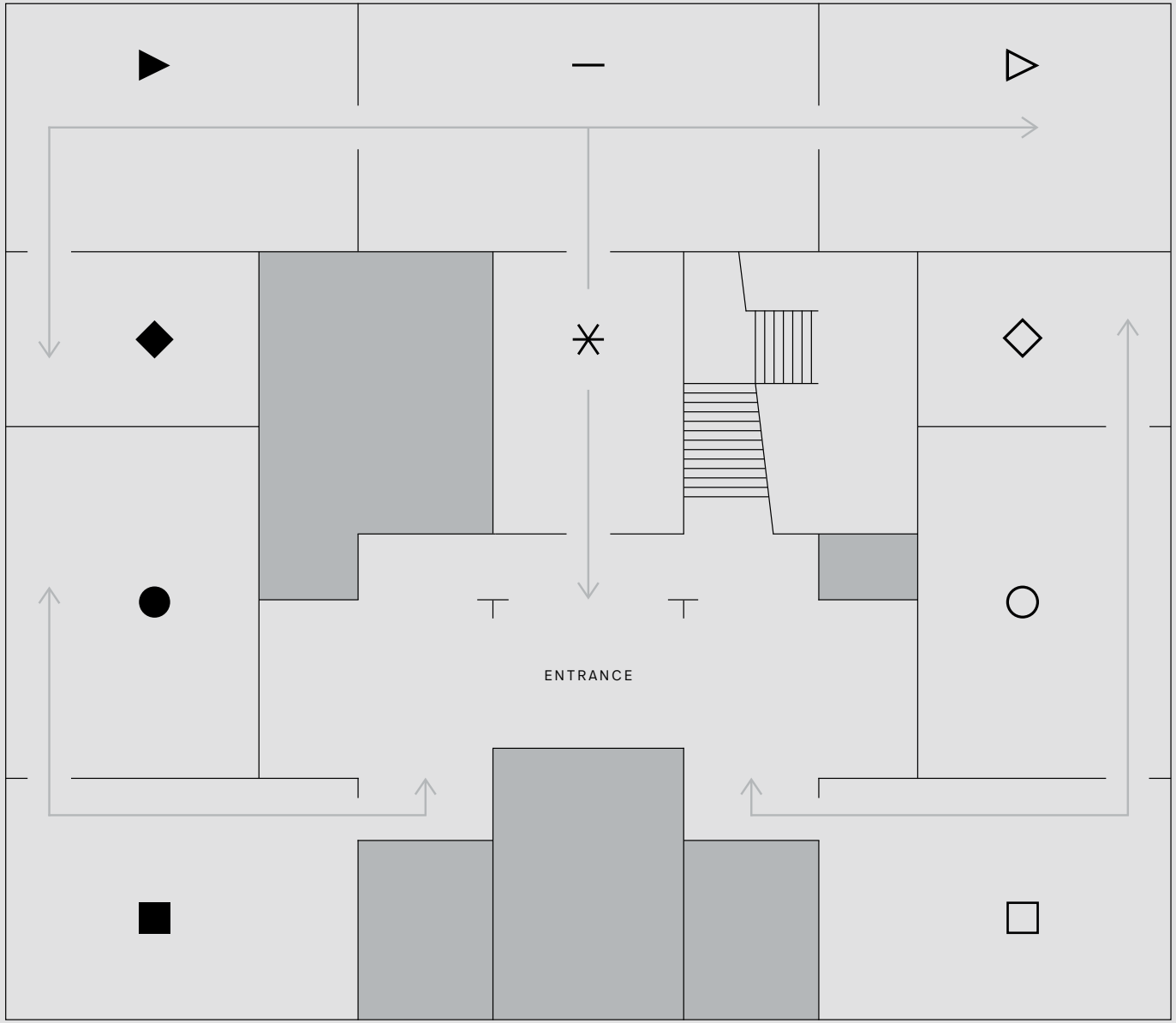

■ ● ◆ ▶ — ✳ ▷ ◇ ○ □ correspond to those in the image captions and the 'Worklist (by gallery)' from page 165 of this book

ALIGNING RESEARCH AND THE NON-ALIGNED

BOJANA PIŠKUR, GRACE SAMBOH AND RACHEL SURIJATA IN CONVERSATION WITH NICK AIKENS

14 SEPTEMBER 2022

NICK

I'd like to discuss how we arrived at the objects and documents in *Rewinding Internationalism*. First, I reached out to you, Bojana, and some colleagues at L'Internationale to think with me on collections and stories that felt meaningful towards exploring internationalism. In particular, I wanted to feature your work around the Non-Aligned Movement. Could you briefly sketch that out for us?[1]

BOJANA

Southern Constellations: The Poetics of the Non-Aligned Movement, resulted from a decade of research on the Non-Aligned Movement, particularly its cultural politics and exchanges, exhibitions and new institutions.[2] For instance,

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1 The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was a transnational political project, a coalition of small and mid-sized states, mostly former colonies and developing countries, from the Global South or the Third World. It was formed in 1961 in Yugoslavia at the Belgrade summit. The NAM represented the first major disruption in the Cold War map, a quest for alternative political alliances, for 'alternative mondialisation'.

2 *Southern Constellations: The Poetics of the Non-Aligned Movement* was shown at Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova, Ljubljana, 7 March – 10 September 2019 and subsequently at institutions throughout the world. See Tamara Soban (ed.), *Southern Constellations: The Poetics of the Non-Aligned Movement*, Ljubljana: Moderna galerija, 2019.

we focused on the *Contemporary Art of the Non-Aligned Countries* exhibition in Jakarta in 1995 in which only Croatia was invited from the former Yugoslavia despite Yugoslavia being a founding member of the Non-Aligned Movement. Yugoslavia was expelled in 1992, a year after the country ceased to be a nation-state and, coincidentally, in Jakarta, which happened to be the location of the 10th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement. The combination at that time of the movement, exhibition, war in Yugoslavia and the political and socio-economic upheaval in Indonesia led us to focus on this 1995 Jakarta exhibition.

NICK

In *Southern Constellations*, that exhibition appeared but at that point you had found very little material on it.

BOJANA

Very little. Some information came from the National Archives of Singapore, and in meeting there with art historian, curator and critic T.K. Sabapathy. From Nada Beroš, a colleague from Zagreb, I learned her reasons for including the Gorgona Group in the 1995 exhibition as curator for Croatia. She gave me images and talked about her personal experience, even though she had almost forgotten about this exhibition more than

20 years back. When she started remembering, new information came out.

NICK

When you first showed me the material, some had come from the post-exhibition catalogue and a seminar with well-known figures like art historian and curator Geeta Kapur and curator and writer David Elliott. The Non-Aligned Movement had, in the wake of the end of the Cold War lost its self-understanding and sense of a political project creating a strange political premise and collection of artists, venues and objects that were framed together with a platform for a new globalised expanded art world that was coming to terms with 'the south' among other realities. As we quickly realised we were ill-equipped to talk about these out-of-joint worlds or engage with the show in terms of proximity or European subjectivity, we reached out to art historian Vera Mey who has done a lot of work in that region. Vera put us in touch with Grace and shared her essay that references the 1995 show.[3] Grace, could you

3 Grace Samboh, 'What Does the Elephant Remember? How Did the Ant Win?', in ed. Paul O'Neill, Simon Sheikh, Lucy Steeds and Mick Wilson, *Curating After the Global: Roadmaps for the Present*, Arles: LUMA Foundation, CCS Bard & MIT Press, 2019.

talk a bit about your work with that exhibition and how it featured in your research in relation to the National Gallery of Indonesia collection?

GRACE

My interest in the Non-Aligned exhibition really stems from the history of Galeri Nasional Indonesia (National Gallery of Indonesia), which emerged in 1946 — the year after the country gained independence from the Dutch Empire. It was President Sukarno, an art collector himself, who first talked about it. There was no legal framework in the country yet, many ministers had not yet been appointed, but he stated there was to be a national gallery. It finally opened in 1999, over 50 years later, with the collection only opened to the public in 2019.

Within the collection exhibition is a chapter that includes the so-called international, of which there are only two accounts of events or exhibitions that directly fed into it: first, a donation from the French government with works by Wassily Kandinsky, Hans Hartung, etc. from the late 1940s and 1950s, once exhibited under the title *Paris — Jakarta 1959*; and second, the other half of the collection made up of works from Yemen, the Philippines, Cuba, etc., whose provenance felt unclear and which I

much later found out originated from the 1995 exhibition. There is a digital version of the exhibition guide in the Indonesian Visual Art Archive (IVAA), but not much else. I found other materials through research into the Indonesian New Art Movement (1975–89).[4] In speaking to sculptor, art critic and curator Jim Supangkat, I discovered that the post-event catalogue was published two years after. There was an unpublished draft of the seminar proceedings. I became more interested in the organisational aspect of the exhibition, particularly because it was done under the watch of the Director General for Culture at the time, Edi Sedyawati, who stayed in her position for ten years. From my point of view, she was the one who pushed through the legal stance of Galeri Nasional so that it could officially exist with the 1995 Non-Aligned exhibition as the pilot project to set an example of its organising capacities as well as potential in making political statements through cultural diplomacy. Through my interest in her, I started looking at the 1995 exhibition.

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4 The Indonesian New Art Movement, also known as *Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru* (GSRB) was an art movement of young artists from Bandung and Yogyakarta against the institutional concept of Indonesian fine art (Indonesian: *Seni Rupa*) being limited to paintings and sculptures.

I have this inkling that Indonesia's New Order regime never really cared about its international stance, other than for trade or capital purposes. It's curious that this exhibition happened three years before Suharto finally stepped down — he was in power for 32 years. Through the newly added dioramas at the Museum Sejarah Nasional (National History Museum), one being the Non-Aligned summit in 1992, I wanted to read Suharto's act of hosting the Non-Aligned as a way to 'beat' Sukarno, who organised the 1955 Bandung Conference. The competition between Suharto and Sukarno allowed for Sedyawati's proposal to happen. It was a G to G invitation that went through foreign or cultural ministries all over the world who didn't even care who was tasked to make that selection.

NICK

The link back to the 50s, the echoing of Bandung in 55 and an out of jointness with history hungover the presentation in *Rewinding Internationalism*. This is very visible in the Gorgona work. Bojana, could you speak to the Gorgona Group and their work in the 1995 exhibition?

BOJANA

Yes, Nada said that she didn't have a clue what to exhibit in Jakarta because

she didn't receive any instructions. So she decided to send five works from the Gorgona Group, even though it was post-Gorgona, since they worked together from 1959 to 1966. As Nada said, the various thematic groups they put them in were strange: Julije Knifer's painting was put in 'signs and symbols' as a graphic work and Ivan Kožarić's into 'tradition and convention' even though this work has nothing to do with tradition. Many antagonisms and misunderstandings surround the work of Gorgona in Jakarta.

For the exhibition in Eindhoven, we were only able to locate three works. One was the Josip Vaništa work in the form of archival copies; Kožarić's will not be this specific work, but one from the series; and a large painting by Julije Knifer...

NICK

Yugoslavia was expelled from the Non-Aligned Movement and indeed it no longer existed when the exhibition was staged. What do you think it meant for these artists to show there? Why do you think they were invited?

BOJANA

Croatia at that time was an observer in the Non-Aligned Movement. It was a newly independent country, admitted as a member of the United Nations

in 1992. An invitation was sent to the foreign ministry in Croatia, and no one cared because newly independent countries were not interested in anything that had to do with the Non-Aligned, Yugoslavia, socialism. They were looking to the West, to what would become the European Union. Nada received this invitation to Jakarta, not knowing what the concept was. She selected Gorgona but no press coverage exists, nothing. The artists probably didn't even realise what kind of exhibition it was.

NICK

The Gorgona selection in the 1995 exhibition is indeed strange. It is as much part of the avant-garde tradition as you say from the late 50s and 60s. To show them out of time, but also the work they made in the late 80s and 90s as individual artists, there's a disconnect. What are they doing there and what are they doing together? Grace, we started talking about other artists in the exhibition and we hovered for a long time around Semsar Siahaan.

GRACE

Because Bojana showed Semsar's work in *Southern Constellations*, not from the 1995 exhibition, because we do not know where that is, but from the collection of Astari Rasjid who was then Indonesian ambassador to Bulgaria

(2016–20). Semsar grew up in Belgrade, which we see through the alphabets he uses to write his diary. He sort of embodies this connection between the former Yugoslavia and Indonesia. I think that's why we kept coming back to him. At some point you were also trying to find archives on what he was doing in the Netherlands.

NICK
Yes. And we went to visit a friend of his, Siswa, to learn more about his time here in the 80s, a path that veered a bit too far off that of the exhibition.

GRACE
Semsar had an idea to make a Pusat Kebudayaan Kerakyatan Sedunia (Cultural Centre for the People of the World). This is a completely different take on how the state approaches internationalism as a state-to-state relationship. In his case, it's about people and their personal relationships. We're still interested in him because of that, which we feature in the exhibition along with the work he did at the time and sketches around the cultural centre.

NICK
Semsar was a hugely significant figure in terms of his artwork, but

also his political stance and activism in Indonesia and his time in the Netherlands. Semsar's work is hard to find, certainly in Europe. Could you say something about the two works that are in *Rewinding Internationalism*?

GRACE
One is an untitled painting from 1999 made when he was in Singapore. The other one is *In Memoriam of Santa Cruz* (2002) when he was already in Canada. Santa Cruz was an incident in Dili, in Timor now Timor-Leste, where the Indonesian army were literally killing people who attempted to liberate Timor from Indonesia. This is not a case Indonesian art history, but also history in general, would want to address. There is no mention of Timor in Indonesia. Why he said yes to the invitation to the 1995 Non-Aligned exhibition is also curious given his fractious relationship with the authorities. It could be that someone else said yes for him, because 1995 was a year after he had been badly beaten by Indonesian police.

NICK
What you describe of Semsar's inclusion in the show not making sense is a bit similar to Gorgona's and the Non-Aligned Movement itself then. At the Van Abbemuseum, we decided to

have freestanding structures with two paintings by Semsar on one side and on the other the Knifer painting. The other structure is the Belkis Ayón Manso print and collage Bojana described. There are these encounters with these objects almost with their backs to each other, not speaking to each other in a way that reflects the unlikely gathering of practices in 1995. We did not use the walls as we wanted to have this sense of impermanence, of things passing through, of these objects, figures and histories as ghosts that were temporarily present.

Our conversation centred for a long time on gift giving and that between Sukarno and Tito. Looking back to this relationship between Yugoslavia and Indonesia, who are organisers of Bandung, two of the four founding partners, how did we get there?

BOJANA

I think it was a work from Indonesia's Merdeka Palace, the president's official residence in Jakarta, that Grace and Rachel said was a gift from Tito. Then we realised it was by artist Marta Jirásková and probably gifted by then former President of Czechoslovakia Novotný. We have a list of gift exchanges from the Museum of Yugoslavia in Belgrade, a very detailed description, and images of the gift giving

ceremony and observing the gift, like Tito and Sukarno observing this statue.

RACHEL

What the Galeri Nasional dubbed as the international collection were all gifts, donations. For the Jakarta Biennale 2021 — ESOK project, we worked with Nadiah Bamadhaj whose work takes as its starting point the so-called *Farmer's Monument* in Jakarta, commissioned by Sukarno to two Russian sculptors Manizer and Roshin and unveiled in 1965, but constantly misunderstood as a gift from Russia.

NICK

Gift giving was a way to talk about the relationship between Yugoslavia and Indonesia, Sukarno and Tito, that went back to the late 50s/60s. We've got some of the transcripts of speeches by Sukarno around the gifts in the exhibition. Hovering around gift giving brought us to Nadiah Bamadhaj's work that you proposed, Grace. Could you say a bit about that?

GRACE

Gifts, or the misunderstandings of gifts, was our lead to Nadiah. In the constellation of archives, stories and objects in space, Nadiah's work becomes a bridge to talk about the 50s. When we discussed the Non-Aligned exhibition,

everything seemed to be locked in the 90s. But with Nadiah's work, we could point to things happening in the 90s being rooted in the 50s. The exhibition's subtitle points to the relationship between the 90s and today, but there are also the many relationships with what came before. And in the case of the Non-Aligned summit that sparked the exhibition, it is related to the Bandung Conference. Bandung for us is a constant myth. People keep talking about it, but no one really delves into it. If, in the 1995 exhibition Gorgona is actually post-Gorgona — they were active in the 50s — then Nadiah is somehow the other way around. This is a very recent work, but she looks at the 50s and creates a connection to how the summit relates to the Bandung Conference.

NICK
The location of the sculpture is also significant. What is the name of the roundabout where it's located?

RACHEL
The name of the roundabout is based on the name of the sculpture — not the official name, but that we all know, *Tugu Tani* (The Farmer's Monument). Everyone who came to the Non-Aligned summit — and the 1995 exhibition — would have to pass this sculpture.

NICK
Looking through the catalogue of the show, it's an exhibition that is predominantly male. Bringing this work in that speaks to the role of women in the independence movement pushed up against that a little bit. I remember getting a bit lost in our conversations and went back to the catalogue. The Belkis Ayón Manso print really jumped out at me. It is now in the Galeri Nasional collection, acquired I guess after the exhibition or as a gift from it. We started talking about the artist, one of the few women artists in the exhibition, but also this extraordinary imagery, this figurative print that in a way is a million miles from the abstraction or conceptual practice of Gorgona.

I got in touch with the foundation and realised that it was not possible to bring the work from Indonesia. There was an exhibition coincidentally in the Reina Sofía, our partners in L'Internationale. The foundation told me that there was a piece in the Netherlands, which we could show in the exhibition. This disjointedness or strangeness of having this Belkis Ayón Manso print, a large work in eight panels, and remaking Vaništa's collage on the other side, speaks to this out of jointness in these practices with these histories.

BOJANA

This room is full of antagonisms, but also full of hidden points we will discover. When I was doing the *Southern Constellation* exhibition, when you see all these images from all the summits from 1961, it's just man, man, man, man. And there are a few women that you see, it's Bandaranaike from Sri Lanka and later on Indira Gandhi from India. And that's about it. It's the men's club. That we kind of break it in a way, feels important.

01 The concept of aesthetics that I handle in this essay is closely related to Susan Buck-Morss's reflections when she revisited 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction'. See Susan Buck-Morss, 'Aesthetics and Anaesthetics: Walter Benjamin's Artwork Essay Reconsidered', *October*, vol. 62, 1992, pp. 3–41.

02 See Jacques Rancière, *El Desacuerdo*, Buenos Aires: Nueva Visión, 1996.

03 See Jodi Dean, *Crowds and Party*, London: Verso, 2016.

04 See Max Weber, *Politics as a Vocation* (1921), cited in Buck-Morss, *Mundo soñado y catástrofe. La desaparición de la utopía de masas en el Este y en el Oeste*, Móstoles: La Balsa de Medusa, 2004, p. 27.

Waiting for Tear Gas: Images between the Power of the Many and the Violence of the Police State (*Pablo Martínez*)

At times of popular uprising, when the people take to the streets to fight for social justice, the resulting collective experience is deeply stimulating for the sensorium:[1] this joint action becomes a political experience that endures in the memory of the bodies. Together, these vulnerable bodies on the streets – expressing themselves, rubbing against one another, affecting each other – form a semiotic machine, and it has a creative strength that serves not only to resist rubber balls, truncheons or any other form of violence deployed by the state powers: by simply being there, protesters shine a light on brand-new worlds yet to come. They generate a specific politics, that is, the politics of appearance, on the streets, and they reveal the power of the many against one – that is, the sovereign of the police state, which goes all out to maintain what it deems to be public order. This 'consensual' fiction,[2] which the security forces uphold, is imposed by the ruling classes and the way they fight to defend private property, organise the use of space, distribute wealth and shape discourses, with their own vested interests.[3] Any force that destabilises this (their) concept of order is considered a *bête noire*, an unrestrained monster that must be suppressed with violence. 'If no social institutions existed which knew the use of violence, then the concept of "state" would be eliminated,'[4] affirms Max Weber; the survival of the state depends directly on its monopoly of the 'legitimate' use of violence. Everyone who takes to the streets to demonstrate – be it to bring down the powers-that-be or to protest peacefully, anywhere from El Raval in Barcelona to the heart of Santiago de Chile, from Tahrir Square in Cairo to the Mong Kok district in Hong Kong – knows that, sooner or later, they will eventually be subjected to violence. They are, in some way or another, waiting for tear gas.

○ Installation view of works by Belkis Ayón Manso, Ivan Kožarić and Semsar Siahaan

○ Installation views of works by Belkis Ayón Manso, Nadiah Bamadhaj and Ivan Kožarić

○ Installation view of works by Ivan Kožarić and Josip Vaništa

○ Installation views of works by Nadiah Bamadhaj and Julije Knifer

Colophon (exhibition)

Rewinding Internationalism
Scenes from the 1990s, today
19 November 2022 – 30 April 2023
Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven

Featuring works by:
Act Up-Barcelona, Belkis Ayón Manso, Christine Baeumler and Beth Grossman, Nadiah Bamadhaj, Cecilia Barriga*, Miguel Benlloch, CADA [Colectivo de Acciones de Arte (Raúl Zurita, Fernando Balcells, Diamela Eltit, Lotty Rosenfeld, Juan Castillo)], Tony Cokes, Betsy Damon, Les Diables Bleus, Eugenio Dittborn, Diamela Eltit, Dai Guangyu, Félix Guattari, Lubaina Himid and Magda Stawarska-Beavan*, Julije Knifer, Ivan Kožarić, Li Jixiang, Chengying Liu, susan pui san lok / lok pui san*, Miguel Denis Norambuena, Miguel Parra Urrutia, Olu Oguibe, Norbert van Onna, Didem Pekün*, Pejvak (Rouzbeh Akhbari, Felix Kalmenson)*, Wang Peng, Nelly Richard, Christian Rodríguez / CEPSS (Centro de Educación y Prevención en Salud Social y Sida), Sandra Ryvlin Rinaudo, Lotty Rosenfeld, Allan Sekula, Semsar Siahaan, Lamnu Suri, Josip Vaništa, Yin Xiuzhen, Zeng Xun

Research projects:
AIDS Anarchive developed with Equipo re (Aimar Arriola, Nancy Garin, Linda Valdés), *Revista de Crítica Cultural*, *The Three Ecologies* and *Internationalist Feminisms* developed with Paulina Varas; *Keepers of the Waters* (Chengdu and Lhasa, China, 1995–96) developed with Sebastian Cichocki; *Contemporary Art of the Non-Aligned Countries: Unity in Diversity in International Art* (Jakarta, 1995), developed with Bojana Piškur, Grace Samboh, Rachel Surijata; *ADN* (Association pour la Démocratie à Nice), with Carnavals Independents and Les Diables Bleus (1991–2004)

*New work

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A first iteration of the project was presented at Netwerk Aalst (19 February – 1 May 2022) and a third iteration developed for Villa Arson, Nice (17 June – 28 August 2023).

Colophon (publication)

Rewinding Internationalism
Scenes from the 1990s, today

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Some contributors to Rewinding Internationalism. Van Abbemuseum, 17th November 2022
Back row (from left): Miguel Parra Urrutia, Linda Valdes, Guy Ouillon, Rouzbeh Akhbari, Felix Kalmenson, Sebastian Cichocki
Middle row (from left): Aimar Arriola, susan pui san lok / lok pui san, Natascha Leonie Simons, Christian Rodríguez, Nick Aikens, Cecilia Barriga, Magda Stawarska-Beavan, Lubaina Himid
Bottom row (from left): Grace Samboh, Sara Buraya Boned, Betsy Damon, Paulina Varas, Nancy Garín, Bojana Piškur

The exhibition at the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven, *Rewinding Internationalism: Scenes from the 1990s, today*, is the second iteration of a three-part endeavour. The project as a whole thinks through the construct of internationalism through new commissions and collaborative research within the context of the museum confederation L'Internationale. As an experiment in how the form and processes of exhibition making produce meaning, the show explores what the 1990s – a moment of seismic shifts across society and culture – mean today.
This publication includes essays and interviews by artists, curators and researchers involved in the project, accompanied by extensive installation views from the Van Abbemuseum.